

South Dakota State University

Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange

SDSU Extension Circulars

SDSU Extension

1961

The Social System of the Dakota Indians

Vernon Malan

Follow this and additional works at: http://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_circ



Part of the [Agriculture Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Malan, Vernon, "The Social System of the Dakota Indians" (1961). *SDSU Extension Circulars*. 607.
http://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_circ/607

This Circular is brought to you for free and open access by the SDSU Extension at Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in SDSU Extension Circulars by an authorized administrator of Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. For more information, please contact michael.biondo@sdstate.edu.

The Social System of the Dakota Indians

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CONTENTS

Foreword.....	2
Definitions and Characteristics of a Social System.....	4
Analysis of the Social System of the Dakota Indians....	5
Knowledge and Beliefs.....	5
Sentiment.....	8
Values.....	11
Norms.....	11
Status Roles or Positions.....	13
Ranks.....	14
Control.....	15
Sanctions.....	17
Facilities.....	18
Summary and Implications.....	18

FOREWORD

"To disseminate useful and practical information and to encourage its adoption to the end that people may help themselves by their own efforts achieve a better life" is the purpose for which the Cooperative Extension Service was created by the Smith Lever Act of 1914. It has significantly contributed to the development of rural people and the productive agricultural economy of America.

The success of this informal, continuing educational program of Extension in the United States is a major reason for the emphasis on technical assistance programs as a feature of our foreign policy throughout the less-developed areas of the free world. Peace may well depend upon our success in teaching the people of many cultures to adopt modern technology and efficient production practices as a means of improving their levels of living.

While this study deals with the culture of the Dakota Indian as a basis for devising more effective Extension educational programs adapted to their values, attitudes, behavior patterns, and beliefs, Extension experience indicates a need for similar studies in other countries. The same teaching methods and motivational appeals to adapt new practices, accept new ideas and ways of living that have proven so effective in bringing about change in the dominant Anglo-Saxon rural population have been less successful among the Indian people even though significant progress is being made.

This poses the question "Why?" Undoubtedly, there are many reasons. One is that cultural differences make it necessary to modify the teaching methods and the motivational stimulus used to bring about change from one culture to another.

Part I of this study is an analytical description of the South Dakota Indian culture using the framework of a social systems theory. It is designed to provide Extension workers and others with a better understanding of the Indian people and background knowledge to use as a basis for sound educational program planning, developing improved teaching methods, and evaluating results.

Part II of this study, published separately, seeks to apply this understanding to the adaption of the principles of Extension education to the Dakota Indian culture.

These reports are a result of a study sponsored by the South Dakota Extension Service in cooperation with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

John T. Stone
Director of Extension

The Social System of the Dakota Indians

By Vernon D. Malan
Associate Professor of Rural Sociology

Definition and Characteristics of a Social System

Initially, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of the concept "social system" and to justify the application of the concept to the kind of society maintained by the Indian people. The social system, in its broadest terms, consists of the "patterned interaction" of a group of people. A family, a community, or even American society—any group in which there is some kind of expected behavior of one person toward another—may be regarded as a social system. Membership may change but the uniform behavior in the society is the important element in its continuation.¹ Dakota Indian society can be viewed as an independent social system because there are definite patterns of behavior by its members which distinguish it from the surrounding non-Indian society.

The integrity of the social system of the Dakota Indians can be explained by the "control of reciprocity."² In the reservation community acceptance of any individual is equated with his conformity to the norms of the group. If, for example, an Indian youth would leave the reservation to seek employment in one of the towns near by, he would very likely be subjected to discrimination which eventually may become unbearable. If he then bounces back to the reservation in order to escape the prejudiced attitudes of the non-Indians, he receives the security of his old groups on the reservation, but he must reciprocate by conforming to the norms of that group. Thus control of his behavior is accomplished by offering him security in return for conformity. In this way the traditional cultural practices are perpetuated and the stability of the reservation social system is retained.

In his book, Social Systems: Essays on Their Persistence and Change, Charles P. Loomis has suggested a method of analyzing social systems that can be applied to the study of the Dakota Indians. Dr. Loomis proposes that social systems can be divided into their two elemental parts: 1) the structure is composed of "identifiable and interdependent" elements which form the constituent parts of the social system, and 2) the function is the result of the processes which bring "regular and uniform sequences of change in structure."³ This combination of social structure and function is known as structural-functional analysis and is widely used by sociologists in studying social systems.

In reality social structure and function cannot be separated, because "as Loomis states "the elements that constitute it as a social system and the processes that articulate it remain the same."⁴ Nevertheless, for analytical purposes structure and function are useful concepts which can be compared analogically with a motion picture film. If the film is stopped to examine a single frame, the photograph will catch the relationships between the sectors at that exact moment in time. This picture is equivalent to the structure of society. When the film is started again, the sequence of change over a period of time can be observed as new relationships develop between the actors. The process of change which is observed as the film moves is equivalent to function. If both these relationships are considered as influencing each other, just as any one photograph is a part of the total motion picture, the basis of structural-functional analysis is apparent.⁵

The model which this study follows has been largely borrowed from the Processually Articulated Structural Model contributed by Dr. Loomis. The essential elements and processes of the Dakota Indian social system will be discussed using nine slightly modified structural-functional categories: 1) Knowledge and beliefs; 2) Sentiments; 3) Values; 4) Norms; 5) Status-roles and positions; 6) Ranks; 7) Controls; 8) Sanctions; and 9) Facilities.⁶ Under each of these categories both social structure and function will be given interrelated treatment, although the pattern will generally be to explain the situation and then to discuss the direction and kinds of changes which are taking place. At the end of this section there will be a brief summary of the major implications indicated by the analysis.

¹ Charles P. Loomis, Social Systems: Essays on Their Persistence and Change, p. 4.

² George C. Homans, The Human Group, pp. 284-288.

³ Loomis, op. cit., pp. 5-7.

⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 11-30.

Analysis of the Social System of the Dakota Indians

Assessment of the changes that have taken place in the culture of the Dakota Indians during the last hundred years does not justify either an optimistic or a pessimistic prediction.⁷ There is evidence that in some areas acculturation has taken place with a relative degree of success, and that the Dakotas have been converted into a "tractable and serious-minded body of home lovers." Nonetheless, assimilation has not been uniformly achieved and the Dakotas could hardly be described as "prosaic and uninteresting."⁸ Perhaps there are still barriers to full acculturation, but while it is not difficult to refute the contention that non-Indian culture is foreign to his "nature" or "intelligence,"⁹ it has been pointed out that the process of adaptation to the non-Indian society has been retarded by the still formidable attitudes opposing full acceptance in that society.¹⁰

The analysis of the projected elements in the Dakota Indian social system must not only be descriptive of the traditional culture pattern but must likewise consider the dynamics of culture change which have produced the kind of society which is presently found on the South Dakota reservation. In each of the categories which will be discussed, the attempt will be to start with the traditional cultural practices and in a logical-historical fashion to explain the changes which have brought the Dakota Indians to their present condition. In this way, it is hoped, it will be possible to produce realistically a picture of reservation living and to explain how it was painted.

Knowledge and Beliefs: The traditional religious beliefs of the Dakota Indians were designed to satisfy their need to identify themselves with the natural world in which they lived. Their most fundamental need was functionally expressed in their striving for "harmony with nature." Although they did not develop elaborate creeds and philosophies to rationalize their rituals, their emotional response was to the power or spirit which inhabited everything in nature.¹¹ The belief "that not only human beings but animals and inanimate objects are actuated by spirits that give them volition and purpose"—the animistic conceptualization—provided the Dakotas with a satisfying explanation of the unknown elements of the world in which they lived. Consequently, almost any natural phenomena could become an object of worship, and although special homage was rendered to the sun and the earth and the four cardinal directions, they might likewise experience religious emotion as they stood "in awe before a magnificent waterfall, or a great tree or a rock of striking formation."¹²

The Siouan word wakan was apparently related to the belief that there was a mysterious and wonderful force that animated the natural world. The word was applied to anything and everything that was incomprehensible.¹³ The divine essence which was expressed in wakan could readily shift its focus from one object to another and under certain

circumstances, sacred places, equipment used in ceremonies, or human beings were temporarily endowed with this supernatural force. Likewise, it was recognized that there were essential differences in the degree of wakan qualities of a specific object or in the purposes for which these qualities were to be used.¹⁴

Unity with nature and the sacredness of the natural world were interwoven in the beliefs of the Dakota.

When the Dakota sat on the ground, they sat on the lap of their mother Earth. In the winter, they bathed their bodies in the sunshine as they did in the icy water of the streams; or they stripped themselves to go out into the rainstorm, "to be alone with Rain," because they felt "a unity with these tremendous forces." Their bodies were nourished by rain and sun and wind just as much as by meat and plant food. The growing child was taught to be sensitive and highly perceptive of all natural phenomena—of wind and insects and plants—so that he could receive instruction from them, knowledge and guidance, and advice.¹⁵

Their approach to the animal kingdom, as well, was not in the manner of detached study but of getting acquainted with their new friends and relatives. The Dakotas were also an integral element in nature interacting harmoniously with the flora and fauna. Their belief in the circle of the nature world was symbolized in their daily lives: their tipis were made round; in camping, their lodges were set in a circular pattern; in ceremonial activities, their people

⁷ Robert G. Athearn, William Tecumseh Sherman and the Settlement of the West, p. 335.

⁸ Frank Fiske, The Taming of the Sioux, p. 186.

⁹ General George A. Custer, Wild Life on the Plains and Horrors of Indian Warfare, p. 31.

¹⁰ Evon Z. Vogt, "The Acculturation of American Indians," The Annals, 311 (May, 1957), pp. 137-146.

¹¹ Ralph Linton, The Study of Man, New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1936.

¹² Melville J. Herskovits, Man and His Works: The Science of Cultural Anthropology, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948.

¹³ J. W. Lynd, "History of the Dakotas," Minnesota Historical Collections, II, pp. 145-146.

¹⁴ Gideon H. Pond, "Dakota Superstitions," Minnesota Historical Collections, II, pp. 215-255.

¹⁵ Dorothy Lee, "Responsibility Among the Dakota," Freedom and Culture, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959, pp. 61-62.

sat, moved, and danced in a circle. The circle suggested the shelter and comfort of home and the security of the family. In decorative art, the undivided circle stood for the whole world; the circle filled with red was the sun; filled with blue, it was the sky; and divided into four parts, it was the four winds.¹⁶

The traditional Dakota religion was a system of belief which provided a nearly optimum adjustment to the physical environment. With the coming of the missionary and the frontiersman, the conditions of life began to drastically change. Retention of their religious beliefs in this utopian society was no longer possible, and their values were perverted by new and strange associations. At first, resistance to the teachings of the missionaries was effective, but only as long as the Dakotas were independent of government control.¹⁷ Later, the missionaries were able to convince the government that Dakota children should be required to attend mission schools and that traditional Indian ceremonies, especially the Sun Dance, should be prohibited. Gradually the disintegration of traditional Dakota religious beliefs left them seeking vainly for new values which would fill the vacuum created by the abolition of their older practices.

The eradication of traditional Dakota religion unfortunately did not result in immediate acceptance of Christianity. The tragic result was a people without values or uncertain of what values were workable. They became lost in the maze of enforced assimilation: their society became more and more disorganized; their leadership wavered; their people were struggling for a way out of this normlessness. The transition from the old to the new culture had degenerated into a condition of anomie. It was easy to conclude that with the conditions of life drastically changing, the Christian religion should have been adopted by the Dakotas.¹⁸ But the barrier to accomplishing this change was the insistence of the missionaries that the Christian religion could not compromise with the practices of Dakota society. The two systems could not be fitted snugly together, but if Christianity could have modified some of its doctrines within the framework of Dakota culture, possibly some of the goals of the missionaries might have gradually been reached without undue disruption of the Indian society.¹⁹

The search for a solution to this dual dilemma—loss of traditional beliefs and incompatibility of Christianity to Dakota culture—culminated in a desperate gamble on the Ghost Dance, which if successful would have resulted in the destruction of their conquerors and the restoration of the buffalo herds by supernatural means. The Ghost Dance would have probably died out shortly after its inception had it not been for the efficient aid of the students from the government boarding schools. The failure of the enforced indoctrination of these young people was evidenced by the fact that "in various ways they assumed the leadership and conduct of the dance."²⁰ It was not very difficult to predict that this marginal religious movement would result

in even greater tragedies for the Dakotas and the massacre at Wounded Knee was a cruel monument, built by the United States Cavalry, to the finality of their traditional way of life.

A succession of transitional religious movements diffused from one reservation to another as the Dakotas searched for some meaningful system of values which would make it possible for them to rationalize the conflict between their traditional culture and the new culture which was being forced upon them. The most successful was the Native American Church or "peyote cult" which provided them with a unique combination of native and Christian religious rituals and an ethical system which appeared well adapted to the conditions of transitional living. Yuwipi ceremonies and other nativistic cults have likewise continued to have a considerable following on the reservations but these differ from the Native American Church in that they aim at the retention or revival of traditional cultural practices.²¹

It is difficult to accurately estimate the number of members of these transitional religious movements because many of their followers are a shifting and unstable group, unwilling to admit their membership or participation for fear of possible reprisals or condemnation. On the Pine Ridge Reservation it has been estimated that at least one-fourth of the population belong to the Native American Church but the percentages would vary considerably from one community to another. Most of the members are described as "middleaged full bloods and young Indians with a relatively small amount of education."²² Competition for adherents may occur between nativistic religious movements since they probably appeal strongly to those

¹⁶ Melvin R. Gilmore, Prairie Smoke, pp. 53-54.

¹⁷ The rejection of the early missionaries is illustrated by an incident reported in the biography by Winifred W. Barton, John P. Williamson: A Brother to the Sioux, p. 165. Rev. Williamson reported that on one occasion when he was visiting the Standing Rock Agency and refused to offer any presents to the Indians, one of their leaders asked him, "What have these greater beggars than I am come here to seek?"

¹⁸ Fiske, op. cit., p. 113.

¹⁹ Vernon D. Malan, Acculturation of the Dakota Indians, pp. 16-17.

²⁰ James Mooney, "The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890," Annual Report of the United States Bureau of Ethnology, Vol. 14, p. 320.

²¹ Wesley R. Hurt, "Factors in the Persistence of Peyote in the Northern Plains," Plains Anthropologist, (May, 1960) p. 21.

²² Ibid., p. 20.

individuals who are caught in between the two culture systems. In addition there are several evangelistic religious groups which have recently had some success on the reservations and may likewise appeal to the marginal person.

Most of the people living on the reservation in South Dakota are not in these marginal religious groups and the factor of secularization needs to be taken into consideration. In a recent study of the values of the people living in several isolated communities on Pine Ridge, it was noted that most of the traditional Dakota values are disappearing; although some are still influential, the values of Western Civilization were accepted with more consensus by the people in these communities than their traditional cultural values, at least in their expressed attitudes.²³ The result is that the sacredness of their values in earlier days is being replaced by secular values of a highly materialistic non-reservation society.

If it is assumed that the Dakota individual actually believes in the materialistic values of the dominant society, his behavior is likely to be contradictory because he lives in social groups in which economic resources are very limited and survival of the group depends upon sharing and other noneconomic values. And if he expects to be accepted in the reservation groups, he must conform to their norms of generosity and mutual cooperation, no matter how strongly he believes in economic competition and the accumulation of wealth. Thus, it can be surmised that many of these reservation people are living in a manner that is contrary to the ways that they believe are desirable, because it is the only possible way that they can survive as members of the group. If this contention is correct, the present emphasis on nonmaterialism does not have the support of sacred belief as it did in the traditional way of life but rather it is the only way that they know to provide the necessities for day to day living. The value of nonmaterialism has changed from a sacred to a secular value.

When the Dakota individual is faced with acting in a way that conflicts with his belief, the group norms of behavior for him become meaningless and he develops attitudes of apathy. The sanctions of his traditional beliefs disintegrate under the influence of the coercive force of a new value system which cannot entirely replace the old. Thus finding his traditional beliefs destroyed, he is floundering without the regulation of either society. This condition of lack of values is accompanied by a breakdown of the individual's sense of attachment to his contemporary society and the Dakota people are in this marginal position of living in large part in a normless society.

The evidence suggests that to a large extent the Dakota Indians have lost much of the earlier system of beliefs which gave purpose and direction to their lives. Reactions to this state of affairs has varied from those individuals who have stubbornly retained their traditional beliefs to those who have fully assimilated the non-Indian values. The assumption of positions at either extreme may provide a relatively

workable adjustment but the individual who vacillates between the two extremes is likely to be searching for some source of meaning in group approved and recognition-giving activities in marginal religions.²⁴

Since the Dakota people have been cut off from their traditional religion, they have not been able to replace this loss in conventional Christian denominations. The principal difficulty has been the relatively firm insistence of the churches on the virtues of the value system of Western Civilization. To the Dakotas, however, Western values lack the vitality and meaning necessary to replace their traditional values. Superficial acceptance of non-Indian ideas of correct behavior is not strong enough to motivate them to pursue these norms in practice. Moreover, it is not uncommon for the older residents of reservation communities to reflect nostalgically on "better times" in the past. They feel that conditions have been getting worse for their people instead of better. Undoubtedly, this tendency to glorify the values of the old culture makes them reluctant to accept new values which seem to lack vitality in comparison with those which guided their lives in times past.²⁵

It is difficult to estimate the extent to which traditional values have disappeared from reservation life because the state of transition varies greatly from one community to another. It can be crudely measured by selected indices of acculturation such as socioeconomic level, age, degree of Indian ancestry, and participation in community groups. Some of the vestiges of traditional living, such as sharing and sociability patterns, may reveal the existence of leaders steeped in traditional belief, who are influential in their communities but these bearers of traditional culture are least likely to engage in the kind of aggressive leadership that is customary in non-Indian society.²⁶

The mistaken idea is sometimes held by those who are not well acquainted with the Dakota Indians that because their ideas and beliefs do not fully coincide with those of the non-Indian population that they do not have the ability to think rationally. Everyone who has had any experience with them must reject this attitude because in the context

²³ Vernon D. Malan and Clinton J. Jesser, The Dakota Indian Religion, p. 58.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 52.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 59.

²⁶ Vernon D. Malan, The Dakota Indian Family, pp. 12-21.

of their present situation, their knowledge of the world in which they live, and their basic beliefs, they are more rational people than their non-Indian neighbors. Their acceptance of methods of scientific investigation, their understanding of modern techniques of learning, and their application of the test of reason to every situation confirms the opinion that the Dakotas surpass most of their fellowmen in their ability to reason.

The application of wise judgment to the transition from Dakota Indian culture to Western Civilization is well illustrated in the case of Dr. Charles Eastman, who started on an isolated reservation and went on to become a successful medical doctor. Dr. Eastman summarized the conflict in rationality in this quotation from his autobiography:

The pages of history are full of licensed murder and the plundering of weaker and less developed peoples and obviously the world today has not outgrown this system. Behind the material and intellectual splendor of our civilization, primitive savagery and cruelty and lust hold sway, undiminished, and as it seems, unheeded. When I let go of my simple instinctive nature religion, I hoped to gain something far loftier as well as more satisfying to the reason. Alas! It is also more confusing and contradictory. The higher and spiritual life, though first in theory, is clearly secondary, if not entirely neglected, in actual practice. When I reduce civilization to its lowest terms, it becomes a system of life based upon trade. The dollar is the measure of value, and might still spells right; otherwise, why war?²⁷

Sentiment: The participation of the Dakota individual in his culture was most significant at the level of the family. It was the kinship group that exhibited concern for his basic human needs; providing subsistence, caring for the sick and dying, and offering protection during infancy and childhood. Because these kinship functions were directly concerned with biological survival, they are suffused with sentiment—"emotions involving sex, hunger, fear of sickness and death, and social anxieties." In the life of the Dakotas, they were "among the earliest learned and the most deeply ingrained attitudes."²⁸ The Dakota kinship system not only provided the framework of their social organization but within the extended family group provided significance and meaningful emotional tone to their behavior.²⁹ The deep sentimentality attached to the relationships within the family have tended to persist long after other elements of Dakota culture have disappeared.

The extended family system of the Dakota Indians was exemplified in the camp circle. A group of related individuals—called the tiyospaye in the Siouan language—lived and worked together under an elaborate system of

rules and regulations governing the behavior of the members who hunted, fought, traveled, and camped together. The solution to the problem of communal living for the Dakotas was to provide the individual with an all-inclusive system of kinship harmony which was a pleasant, emotionally satisfying, discipline for group living. Any member of the group who violated the rules was subject to the sanction of loss of social status, but perhaps more important, the rewards of sentimental attachment to the group were withdrawn. Observance of kinship rules and being a good relative meant expressing proper social relationships, kindness, friendship, and consideration for all other members of the camp circle. These mutual attachments were the chief source of happiness for the Dakotas, reinforcing the feeling that they belonged and were accepted in the intimate association that existed in the camp circle.³⁰

The extended family, living together in close harmony in the camp circle, has been aptly described by Ella Deloria as "a scheme of life that worked," and the description of the tiyospaye in her book, Speaking of Indians, is an excellent source for verifying the importance of sentiment in the family relationships of the Dakota Indians. The significance of the kinship system is exemplified in Professor Deloria's words:

As you said "Uncle" or "Father" or "Brother" in either address or reference you must immediately control your thinking of him; you must assume the correct mental attitude due the particular relative addressed and you must express that attitude in its fitting outward behavior and mien, according to the accepted convention. Thus, term, attitude, behavior, in the correct combinations, were what every member of society must learn and observe undeviatingly. They were standard and inexorable; they had always been. One simply was born into their rule and conformed to them invariably as a matter of course. The more correctly he could do this, whatever the personal sacrifice involved at times, the better member of the group he was, the bet-

²⁷ Charles A. Eastman, From the Deep Wood to Civilization, Boston: Little Brown, and Co., 1916, p. 194.

²⁸ Julian H. Steward, Theory of Culture Change, p. 62.

²⁹ Florence R. Kluckhohn, "Dominant and Substitute Profiles of Cultural Orientations: Their Significance for the Analysis of Social Stratification," Social Forces, XXVIII (May, 1950) 376.

³⁰ Gordon Macgregor, Warriors Without Weapons, p. 54.

ter his standing as a Dakota, the higher his prestige as a person.³¹

The great tenderness and affection shown in the attitudes of brother for brother or sister for sister or the admiration and respect shown in the attitudes of avoidance between a man and his mother-in-law or a wife for her father-in-law were extremely different patterns of sentiment, but they nevertheless provided for the complete range of affectional response within the kinship arrangement. Likewise, the provision of affection and guidance by Dakota parents for their children exhibited the ideal of parental love and concern which would constantly remind impressionable children of their duty and devotion to their kinsmen. Sentiment was an essential element in the family embracing all of the levels of relationship between family members but it was emphasized in the greatest degree toward infancy and old age. In the Dakota folklore and songs, the most honored form of love was that of parents for their children and the most respect and devotion was reserved for those older, experienced leaders who would guide the tribes in "the right path."

The attitudes of adults toward children and their treatment of even very young infants reflected their maternal and paternal sentiments. The provision for the child's material needs—giving them food, clothing, and personal ornaments—was made with expressions of care and affection, and the Dakotas tried to teach pride and dignity to their children by regarding them as rational creatures endowed with the ability to exercise their powers of choice and responsibility. The rearing of Dakota children was designed to socialize them with the feeling "that they were part of nature, or relatives of all things," and this relatedness and mutuality with nature was correlated with their responsibility to their kinship group.³²

Youth was taught that to serve himself he must first serve his people. "To fail in one's duty to others, meant to fail in the test of manhood," and the young man's duty was to develop himself, "to increase in hardihood, in physical prowess, in skill, in bravery, because through enhancing himself he enhanced his society."

From the time a child could walk, he was encouraged to give to others. When mothers were giving to the weak and old, they gave portions to their children also, so that they could give their own gifts to those in need. The good man, the "man whom all praise," was the man who trained himself rigorously in responsibility.³³

The ideal parent-child interaction among the Dakotas was based on attitudes of deep-seated affection; children were granted a large measure of independence but indoctrinated with a fierce loyalty to their kinship group. From an early age, the parents regarded their children as autonomous individuals with responsibility for their own actions and in return demanded much cooperation from them.³⁴ Child training was accomplished by rewarding correct be-

havior and shaming children who violated the rules of the group. Physical punishments were practically unknown and they never roughly or unnecessarily reproved their children. If admonishment seemed advisable, it was reasonably and gently given by a respected kinsman in order not to harm the child's affection for his biological parents.³⁵

The grandparents generation exemplified the "ideal of kindness and generosity" in the traditional Dakota culture. The grandfather was a counselor to the young and was highly respected for his experience and his wisdom. The grandmother was a "second mother," frequently "taking over the hard work of the household for her daughters during their childbearing period and sharing the care of the new grandchildren." She did not assume permanent and complete responsibility for care of the children and could be indulgent of the little children, which meant that an exceedingly pleasant and lifelong attachment grew up between the oldest and the youngest generation.³⁶

The respect for the older men in the Dakota camp circle was demonstrated again in the council which served to advise and settle disputes. The council was "composed of men who were mature, men of experience, wisdom and prestige, who discussed matters pertaining to the welfare of the group, helped clarify the obscure, settled disputes and generally furnished guidance for the group." In most cases their decisions were not enforced by direct coercion but the announcement of their consensus was probably equivalent to a final decision which no member of the group would dare question. Undoubtedly "the end of discussion in council was to reach agreement, not as to expediency, not as to the preferable, but as to the only right course."³⁷

It has been suggested that "behavior which functions on a family level is the most difficult to change," even when the society is in violent transition, because of the sentiment associated with consanguine relationships.³⁸ In the case of the Dakota Indians this generalization would seem to be empirically demonstrated, for it is evident that the one element of the traditional culture which has been retained almost intact is their close family attach-

³¹ Ella Deloria, *Speaking of Indians*, pp. 29-30.

³² Dorothy Lee, *Freedom and Culture*, p. 63.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

³⁴ Macgregor, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

³⁵ Malan, *The Dakota Indian Family*, pp. 12-13.

³⁶ Macgregor, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

³⁷ Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

³⁸ Steward, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

ments, and this has continued despite the efforts of government officials to destroy the basic pattern of the tiyospaye, the deterioration of the role of the father, the loss of religious sanctions for family behavior, the material transformation of the reservation, and an accelerating rate of social change in the larger society.

The purpose of the Allotment Act was to dissolve the communal control and substitute family ownership of the land resources, thus it was a blow designed to weaken the bonds within the kinship groups and break them into nuclear family units. "The allotment system would thus weaken or destroy the cooperating unit of tribal organization," but by so doing the government was "also assailing the only sound foundation upon which it was possible to rebuild a transformed Dakota social and economic organization."³⁹ Even forced settlement on family units and dispersion of kinship groups was not completely successful in accomplishing the purposes of the act because related families were frequently able to obtain their land allotments in contiguous areas. The camp circle was stretched into an irregular, meandering settlement of one-room log cabins along the creek or river. The result is that family homes are arranged spatially in a widely separated geographical pattern today in comparison with the camp circle.

There has been a decline in the frequency and intensity of intimate kinship contacts and the family circle has contracted, thus excluding more distant relatives. Yet it is unusual for an individual to live completely isolated from his relatives and most individuals will have a few immediate family members living near by. It is not uncommon for married children to live with their parents or even in a tent beside the parent's home. The nearest neighbors are frequently brothers or sisters, uncles or aunts, and other close relatives.⁴⁰ In a recent study of the nonranching communities on the Pine Ridge Reservation, it was observed that nearly one-third of the households had relatives not belonging to the biological families living in the home.⁴¹ The evidence of sharing, visiting, and generosity within these extended family groups is sufficient to conclude that vestigial kinship sentiment is the most potent force in holding the more traditional communities together.⁴²

The retention of traditional kinship terminology has been observed in some reservation areas but it is difficult to ascertain how extensively it is known and used by the youngest generation. The use of English terminology is sometimes noted in conjunction with the Dakota kinship terms. One measure of assimilation might well be the extent to which the traditional kinship terms of address have been retained because, as Macgregor observed, a young person is ordinarily aware of both systems and may clarify his reference by saying, "That is my father--of course, he is really only my uncle--but we call 'father' in Indian." Among the families which still speak the Siouan language the preservation of traditional terminology and related behavior is more frequent:

When members of the extended family live

as neighbors, they continue to act according to the role of their relationship position. Thus a child born into a group receives treatment as a son, a grandson, or a brother from those he is taught to call "father," "grandfather," or "brother." If the younger people appear lax in this behavior, a grandparent will often reprimand them for not adhering to the Indian way.⁴³

Perhaps the greatest change that has taken place in the Dakota family is the loss of prestige by the adult warrior who no longer plays the essential role of provider and protector to the other family members. The gradual loss of honor and respect has eroded the authority of the family head until the point has been reached at which the status of women, especially if they have a dependable income, has superseded the domination of the family by the males. Superficially, the adult male may attempt to establish his position by emphasizing his traditional role as chief decision-maker and head of the family. At the same time if he cannot provide for the material needs of his family, the status of the female increases in proportion to her ability to assume responsibility for their economic needs. This shift in statuses is "still causing the Teton Dakota family to appear shaky and contentious, and this change has been compounded by a sloughing-off of the extended kinship ties. The resulting insecurity can be temporarily compensated by reemphasizing the old values of mutual aid and assistance in times of crisis."⁴⁴

The attempted destruction of the extended family groups, the decline in use of kinship terms, and the deteriorating role of the male head have all been detrimental to the retention of traditional family sentiments. Nevertheless, the reduced family unit has remained as the last refuge of meaning and significance for many of the older Dakota people. Some kinship remnants are still found in the small in-group relationships and these serve as secure retreat in times when there is some threat to their way of living.⁴⁵

³⁹Malan, Acculturation of the Dakota Indians, p. 26.

⁴⁰Macgregor, op. cit., p. 61.

⁴¹Ernest L. Schusky and Vernon D. Malan, The Dakota Indian Community, (unpublished manuscript), p. 22.

⁴²Malan, The Dakota Indian Family, pp. 46-56.

⁴³Macgregor, op. cit., p. 62.

⁴⁴Vernon D. Malan, "Theories of Culture Change Relevant to the Study of the Dakota Indians," Plains Anthropologist, Vol. 6, June 11, 1961, p. 16.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 13-19.

Values: The moral code of the Dakotas has been condensed to four essential virtues phrased in the words of Gordon Macgregor:

1) "As children they were taught to be brave, to fight against odds if need be and not run away without honor. Honor could be had by outwitting and by stealth as well as by dashing openly into combat."

2) "Fortitude, the second great virtue of the Dakota, was closely related to bravery. It was not only courage in battle but the enduring courage which enabled them to accept long hardships and to suffer pain and the self-inflicted tortures of their ceremonials."

3) "The third virtue, generosity, was one of the bases of behavior among one's own kindred. The 'give-away,' a dramatic ceremony of distributing all of one's own belongings, was a means of honoring others and gaining social prestige."

4) "The fourth virtue of Dakota life is sometimes termed 'wisdom' and sometimes 'moral integrity.' Both were certainly ideals of manly behavior. Old men were expected to be wise and composed, and those who spoke well and showed good insight and judgment were elected to the councils. In the family the grandfathers were respected for their wisdom and were expected to pass it on to their grandsons."⁴⁶

These were not just a list of ideals that were supposed to guide the behavior of the individual in traditional Dakota society; they were values which were woven into the fabric of their existence. The penetration of religion into every phase of their lives made these values living codes as vital and binding as any code of behavior has ever been. As they sought to complete the cycle of their life, living in harmony with nature and participating in the kinship pattern, the Dakotas were aware that these ethical goals were the mortar which held the structure of their universe together.⁴⁷

It seems likely that the Dakota people retained many of their older values after they were placed on the reservations, but that gradually during the recent years the values of Western Civilization have been superimposed upon the existing codes. Since the two value systems differ in important areas, they cannot be readily assimilated in all areas of their lives, and the result is that they suffer from considerable unresolved value conflict. This "conflict in values" thesis would explain much of the disorganization of reservation life, the high rates of personality maladjustment and the striving for a solution to the value conflict in marginal religious activities.

The qualified conclusions from a limited study of values on the Pine Ridge Reservation revealed that: 1) the expressed attitudes indicated virtually universal acceptance of some of the ideals of Western Civilization; 2) approval of traditional values in the Indian culture was less pronounced, indicating a gradual decline in the influence of these values on the contemporary life of the reservation people; 3) traditional values have greater acceptance among those individuals who were older, had less education

and lower level of living, and with full Indian ancestry; 4) these selected indices of acculturation were not necessarily associated with participation in marginal religious activities; 5) significant association was, however, discovered between marginal religious participation and the degree of acceptance of Dakota values, and from these findings it was concluded: "the more the individual accepts the values of Dakota society along with Western values, the more likely he is to develop value conflicts which he attempts to resolve in marginal religious activities."⁴⁸

If the evidence is adequate to conclude that the conflicting attitudes expressed by the Dakotas are the result of confusion in their basic values, it can be interpreted to mean that they are "under the influence of two cultures but not living completely in either," and that "conflicting standards of behavior make it inevitable that almost any action of the individual is out of line with the standards of some members of the community."⁴⁹ It is not surprising then to find a wide divergence of viewpoints regarding the ethical qualities of the Indians. Non-Indians who have been indoctrinated with values of the American frontier—individualism, hard work, thrift, and aggressive materialism—are likely to regard traditional Dakota values such as cooperation, generosity, and nonmaterialism with abhorrence. A more generous view of the value traits of the original Americans would probably be expressed by individuals who had grown up with these values and understood their application in the Dakota society. They would probably agree with the contention of Dr. Charles A. Eastman that the ideal person was motivated by philosophical realism: "his gift of eloquence, wit, humor, and poetry is well established; his democracy and community life was much nearer the ideal than ours today; his standard of honor and friendship unsurpassed, and all his faults are the faults of generous youth."⁵⁰

Norms: The belief in harmony with nature, the sentiment of kinship and the values of bravery, fortitude, generosity and wisdom were interrelated in the culture pattern of the Dakotas. These ideals served as the foundation for the mythological orientation of their society. From these conceptualizations they extracted the behavioral rules and standards which guided the conduct of their lives. The traditional norms of Dakota society were fundamentally elaborations of their belief system into a code of proper conduct.

⁴⁶ Macgregor, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107.

⁴⁷ Paul Radin, *The World of Primitive Man*, pp. 53-54.

⁴⁸ Malan and Jessor, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁴⁹ Macgregor, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

⁵⁰ Eastman, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

As a vital part of the natural world in which they lived, the Dakotas were careful not to exploit the land, and their attitudes toward the animals which served as their food were not predatory. Since every living thing had an equal right to existence, they were convinced that life should not be needlessly wasted. When it was necessary to take the life of the buffalo for food, they recognized the great sacrifice their brother was making that they might live and they ceremonially praised him for his generosity. Their greatest fear was of the lightening which could ignite vast prairie fires destroying the grass upon which the bison herds depended. They were aware of the equilibrium that existed in the ecology of the plains, and their actions were always designed to avoid serious disruption and to restore the natural balance which existed between the earth and its flora and fauna. They were the original conservationists in America.

Membership in the kinship group implied that the individual Dakota would abide by the established practices governing the degrees of familiarity and respect required among kinsmen. Since the kinship group provided him with a primary focus for his interests and loyalties, it was his duty to cooperate, to assist other members, and to place group interests above his own. The members of the kinship group were considered in close and continuous friendly interaction and quarrels between them were considered much more reprehensible than quarrels between members and outsiders.⁵¹

The valued behavior of the Dakota moral code provided additional norms of generosity, integrity, courage, self-control, wisdom, and sociability. The ideal sharing pattern was so definitely the object of training of youth and the focus of prestige for the adult that even slight deviations from the norms were regarded as despicable.⁵² Their scrupulous code of honesty received ample testimony from early missionaries. They traveled extensively through Dakota Territory without lock or key on their belongings and "did not lose from a thread to a shoestring."⁵³ Recognition of courageous acts was ceremonially accorded the individual who performed an unusual feat of valor.⁵⁴ Self-approach to danger, self-sacrifice, feasting, penance, and purification.⁵⁵ The dignity of wise old men of the Dakotas was legion; in council they had to make their decisions with foresight; and in spirit they achieved unusual freedom in a society dominated by stereotyped formulas of group living.⁵⁶ Visiting, joking, and friendly conversation was valued because of the affection and devotion which it implied between compatible members of the band.⁵⁷ These basic traits were internalized by the individual members of Dakota society, appearing in their attitudes and actions, these traits must be regarded as the principle behavioral norms intricately bound into their total value system.

The struggle for survival, which was initiated by the confinement on reservations, gradually evolved into a passive resistance which appeared to the Dakotas as the only reasonable adaptation to reservation living. As a conquered people they could no longer engage in their most

honored warfare activities. They could no longer amass prestige according to the old codes which reserved the greatest recognition for striking an unwounded enemy in battle.⁵⁸

Nonmilitary resistance brought forth the supreme skill of the Dakota leaders in oratory and obstructionism. They were soon engaged in a battle of wits and strategy with the Indian Agents sent to supervise the reservations. McGillycuddy, one of the agents at Pine Ridge, tried unsuccessfully for months to convince the leaders that they should send their children to the reservation boarding school, but first they objected to having the children bathed. After he had explained the need for cleanliness in the school, they adamantly refused to have their children's hair cut, because the scalplock was a badge of honor. The agent was finally forced to make some concessions to Dakota customs, and even convinced Red Cloud to risk sending his daughter. But the old chief, on an unannounced inspection of the boarding school, "found his little princess scrubbing the kitchen floor, a buxom white cook standing over her threateningly. The enraged chief almost frightened the female staff to death before he went storming off to his camp, bearing his rescued child with him."⁵⁹

This passive adaptation is most apparent today in the resistance the Indian people exhibit to accepting the materialism, economic competition, and money economy that has been thrust upon them by the dominant non-Indian society. This does not mean that they have not accepted most of the mechanical conveniences offered by their conquerors. They could easily observe the advantage of automobiles for transportation, but they do not use them in the same way as their non-Indian neighbors because they have different norms. The assimilation of these material elements was made to jibe with their customary practices, and it is not uncommon for modern equipment to serve traditional functions. One of the principle uses of the automobile, for example, is to provide transportation to the family for

⁵¹ Ralph Linton, The Study of Man, p. 152.

⁵² Erick H. Erickson, "Observations on Sioux Education," The Journal of Psychology, VII (January, 1939), p. 117.

⁵³ Stephen R. Riggs, Mary and I: Forty Years With the Sioux, p. 395.

⁵⁴ George Devereux, Reality and Dream, p. 70.

⁵⁵ J. W. Lynd, "History of the Dakotas," Minnesota Historical Collections, II, p. 170.

⁵⁶ Paul Radin, The Story of the American Indian, pp. 307-309.

⁵⁷ Francis Parkman, The Oregon Trail, pp. 124-125.

⁵⁸ Erickson, op. cit., p. 107.

⁵⁹ George E. Hyde, A Sioux Chronicle, pp. 101-102.

attending celebrations or visiting relatives.

The acceptance of external, material traits of Western Civilization is most evident on the Dakota reservations, but on the other hand, the nonmaterial culture—based on traditional attitudes and values—has been modified very slowly, and thus it is difficult to discern any basic shift in their fundamental value system. The behavioral norms often appear inconsistent, because they must be twisted to conform to both the traditional values and modern technology at the same time. These norms are likewise subject to great variations in the degree of acceptance which they are accorded by individuals who are in the process of transition from one culture to another. Although the changes in the norms are not so easily observed as changes in the material culture, "the evidence seems to suggest that in the last fifty years the Dakota people have retained much of the meaning of their customs and traditions in spite of all the external cultural pressures."⁶⁰

Status-Roles or Positions: The crucial status-roles in traditional Dakota society were based either on the sex dichotomy or on differentiation between age groups. The roles of hunter, warrior, horseman, orator, and councilor were synthesized in the most honored male who vowed to risk everything for the welfare and prestige of the kinship group. The status-giving roles of the women—wife, mother, and helpmate—were undergirded by their concept of generosity. The female members of the kinship group demonstrated their generosity by cooperatively assisting each other in caring for the needs of the males and rearing the children.⁶¹

The principle distinction in age roles was between children and adults. The great change from the status-role of childhood to that of adulthood was marked by a vision-seeking ritual preparing the young man for the responsibility and self-sacrifice of adult life. The quest for a vision provided "the supernatural reason and conditions for uncompromising acceptance of the group's roles."⁶² While the transition from childhood to adult life would not require the same degree of ceremonial observance for the females, there was a definite period of training for the roles of wife and mother. There was another significant change in the status-role of the individual as they reached the age of wisdom which was regarded as the special quality of later maturity.

The main trends which can be observed in the changing status-roles in contemporary reservation society are: 1) the role of the kinship group in protecting and providing for growing children is being assumed by the biological parents, but when the authority of the extended family exist concurrently, they may undermine each other to the degree that "the individual finds it possible now to move from one level to the other and escape the concerted action that made the traditional society so effective in regulating behavior";⁶³ 2) the role of the father changed from provider and defender to executive head of the small family group,

but the support for the assumption of this role was badly eroded by the loss of his traditionally honored activities; 3) the role of the mother consequently has come to possess primary responsibility for the direction and financial support of the immediate family unit, although she must still show deference to her husband, who ostensibly exercises his prerogatives as head of the household.

The shifting status-roles of contemporary reservation society are associated with confusion in the attitudes of many members of the transitional communities. Women may now commit acts that were forbidden in former times, such as beating their children, berating their husbands, or deserting their families. Men may try to reassert their authority as full master of the family by mistreating their wives and children or try to prove their masculine license to periodic alcoholic intemperance. The old society provided a means of escape from an unsatisfactory family situation for children. They could go to live in the lodge of a relative because they usually had several "mothers" who were responsible for their care. In some cases it is still possible for them to escape the biological family if conditions become too painful, but emotional conflict may pervade any of the homes to which they might move, and the chronic exposure to friction and disappointment operate as the essential conditioning factors.⁶⁴

The role of the older people in guiding and advising youth has undergone considerable change from earlier to modern times. In the more traditional communities there are still some respected older people who have been able to retain their roles as counselor and sage, but unfortunately many of these people have reached the age where their influence is no longer significant, and the younger people distrust their advice, although they may still be willing to accept their generosity. The wisdom of the ancients may not be appropriate to the conditions of present-day living. The repository of beliefs, values, and knowledge which the older people possess cannot be forced upon those who are learning new ways from non-Indian society, and only in times of personal crisis or financial need are the young people likely to revert to the security and assurances which are offered by the concern of the aged for their people.

The introduction of new status-roles based on the differentiation of occupations in non-Indian society has

⁶⁰Vernon D. Malan and Martin Kallich, "A Changing Dakota Indian Culture," South Dakota Farm and Home Research, (May, 1957), p. 15.

⁶¹Malan, The Dakota Indian Family, p. 27.

⁶²Hagen and Schaw, op. cit., p. 8-11.

⁶³Ibid., p. 10-6.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 10-7.

occurred along with the assimilation of other traits of the dominant society. The role of the Indian who works for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, for example, may differ drastically from that of the unemployed, unskilled, traditional-oriented individual living in one of the isolated communities. The role of the reservation Indian who has achieved some degree of success in ranching or farming may be differentiated from the role of the seasonal worker who provides much of the agricultural labor on the farms of western South Dakota and Nebraska. There are essential distinctions between the roles of the migrant and the non-migrant.⁶⁵ All of these differences in roles are related to the acculturation process, since it can be demonstrated that they tend to be assumed by individuals who have given up or are in the process of giving up their traditional culture. Thus it can be assumed that these new roles tend to imitate those of the non-Indian society, but will be modified to fit into the reservation situation. It is probably because these roles are superimposed and arbitrarily defined that they have not served adequately to provide models by which the traditional person on the reservation can visualize the steps in the process of transition from his own position to acceptability in the larger society.

Ranks: The concept of an all-powerful chief with authority over the whole Dakota nation was an arbitrary invention of the governmental representatives who wished to facilitate their negotiations with the Indian tribes. The elevation of certain outstanding men to such a lofty position was foreign to the Dakota view of leadership.⁶⁶ Their leaders were men of the people, believing resolutely in equality, and dedicated to the welfare of their tribe. Participating in the council of elders, they sought consensus on important questions. Their recommendations were respected, but they nevertheless lacked arbitrary power to enforce their decisions. Because of the honor with which they were regarded, it seems unlikely that the opinions of these elected representatives of the kinship group were ignored, since they exercised a leadership which was democratic, reasonable, and permissive.

There were special circumstances in which elected leaders could demand more absolute control over their charges. The most successful warriors might be elected to lead a raiding party or a buffalo hunt, and during the time that the event was in progress, the authority of the leader had to be respected. In the skirmishes with the armed forces on the frontier, the Dakotas became aware of the necessity for more organized effort under the control of a war chief, but they were never able to adequately unite their forces or police the heedless actions of their brave young men bent upon achieving individual honor in warfare.

Within the band the "soldier societies" or *akicita* were responsible for maintaining order. They were associations of young men chosen on the basis of their individual accomplishment to act as a policing unit in the camp circle, as they moved to new hunting grounds, and during the actual

buffalo hunt. Service in the *akicita* was an honor which added to the prestige of the family as well as a duty to the kinship group. They were responsible for carrying out the decisions discussed and agreed upon in council and to keep order during expeditions, "guarding against surprise attacks, restraining the overzealous, urging on the stragglers, and insuring that no one left the group without proper authority."⁶⁸

The social control function of the "soldier societies" was supplemented by group sanctions. It was not necessary for the members of the societies to be greatly differentiated from the others by special ranks in order for their efforts to be successful. In the closely knit camp circle their duties were to act as guards, prevent violations of tribal codes, settle disputes, detect and judge the innocence or guilt of suspects, punish guilty individuals, and compensate individuals harmed by the actions of others. These obligations were fulfilled in close identification with the family group which supported and sanctioned responsible behavior.⁶⁹

As long as the Dakotas were free, they traveled in compact bands knit together by the camp circle kinship system and dedication to their respected leaders. On the reservation the early government policy tended to destroy the system of extended family organization and undermine the influence of the leading men.⁷⁰ Public officials and educators on the reservation probably failed to appreciate the need for progressive leadership. There was much consternation when the government agents realized that the older generation had taken the responsibility of indoctrinating their youth with traditional culture patterns and insisted that conservatism was the only means that would avoid chaos which had arisen from cultural change. They tried persuasion, and then coercion, and even direct violent action to enforce their laws, but the pattern of passive resistance was effectively instilled in many of the people living in the more isolated reservation areas among

⁶⁵ Frank C. Estes, A Study of Selected Factors Which May be Associated With the Imminent Migration of Individuals From the Lower Brule Indian Reservation, (Unpublished Master's Thesis, South Dakota State College, Brookings, S. D., pp. 89-90.)

⁶⁶ Hyde, Red Cloud's Folk, p. 309.

⁶⁷ Frances Densmore, "Teton Sioux Music," Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 61 (1918), p. 481.

⁶⁸ Fred Eggan, Social Anthropology of North American Tribes, p. 347.

⁶⁹ Norman D. Humphrey, "Police and Tribal Welfare in Plains Indian Cultures," Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, XXXIII (May, 1943), p. 160.

⁷⁰ Hyde, Red Cloud's Folk, p. 315.

those extended families held together by the leadership of the older people.

In the more isolated communities today there are still remnants of this pattern of permissive leadership. It is founded on the knowledge of the traditional cultural ways possessed by the older members of the community; it emphasizes unity and cooperation within the kinship group; it depends upon willingness to seek out the recognized permissive leaders for their advice and example; and it is never aggressive, often goes unrecognized, and is most effective in times of crisis. The position of the permissive leader in the traditional community and the influence they are able to exert is revealed in the patterns of sharing and visiting, participating in social activities, such as joking, gossiping, and discussing old times, and attending feasts and celebrations.⁷¹

A different kind of leadership, fostered by the example of practical politics in non-Indian society, has developed out of the torn fabric of reservation life. It is the more aggressive, authoritarian, uncompromising leadership exhibited by the elected members of the tribal council. The council is a transitional institution, split by all of the conflicts which are associated with change from the old to the new way of doing things. In most cases the traditional and modern factions are represented on the council, although a dynamic kind of leader seems to be evolving, who is able to dominate both factions. The most successful tribal chairmen are likely to be individuals who have gained sufficient prestige because they are able to accomplish these paradoxical goals simultaneously: 1) they are able to effectively bargain and compete with government officials and other non-Indians because their proficiency in speaking and understanding the English language and their knowledge of American culture is on the same level as the non-Indian and 2) they are able at the same time to convince the more traditional people on their reservations that they have knowledge of the old ways, favor them, and will fight for the retention of their land and culture against the machinations of stockgrowers associations, evil congressmen, and any other out-groups seeking to take advantage of their position of subjugation to the rules of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Political leadership imposed on the old social organization of the Dakota people has never penetrated effectively into the local neighborhood of related families. They tend to regard it with suspicion. Observing superficially the kind of political chicanery occasionally publicized in national elections, they may model their own tribal politics after the worst examples of undemocratic practice. They have a "knowing" attitude--a cynical belief that anyone running for election to the tribal council cannot be trusted. Thus this dubious honor should be passed around in order that everyone might have the opportunity to benefit directly or indirectly from the financial rewards seemingly duly accorded to those serving on the council. The cases of corruption and dishonesty of council members and of dis-

tortion of democratic goals in tribal elections have been sufficiently common to be regarded by many reservation residents as the accepted procedure.

Factionalism has been the significant outcome of that fact that "the everchanging members of the council do not command universal respect or maintain a strong influence with the sub-band as a whole," and it has been complicated by social groups with varying degrees of acculturation. In most cases there seem to be at least four important factions: 1) the traditional group of tribal leaders who function within their own family and community and are antagonistic to the tribal council; 2) the "younger group of highly acculturated and relatively well-educated Indians who form a faction in the tribal council"; 3) the more conservative, politically-oriented sociological full-blood group who are usually the other faction on the council; and 4) the "numerous socio-political group...composed of economically depressed, relatively maladjusted Indians who have little formal politics."⁷²

The persistence of these factions has influenced the system of social stratification which exists on most reservations. While there are still no rigid class lines, in areas where there are a sufficient number of Indians who have achieved some success in agriculture or in semi-professional activities there is class-like behavior. The great majority of the people in the lower socio-economic level are ranked in the inferior faction which tends to be dominated by a small number of individuals who are striving for a more middleclass existence.

Control: The ancient tribal customs were inherently effective in controlling the behavior of the Dakotas without the necessity of substantial government or laws. These essential rules were organic, emanating from the compulsion attendant upon their ancient communities to preserve social order and promote the communal welfare. These mores served them well because they were "self-made and commensurate with the enlightenment of the body politic."⁷³ The institutions of kinship and family were admirably contrived to vest authority in the older generation. This potential power was used with restraint and was buttressed by the example and tutelage which the adults provided their youth.

Authority vested in the kinship group was used sparingly and with extreme caution because of the respect the Dakotas held for the autonomous responsibility of each individual. The ideal expression of the Dakota attitude toward responsibility was: "The Dakota were responsible for all things,

⁷¹ Malan, *The Dakota Indian Family*, pp. 40-56.

⁷² Hurt, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁷³ Charles E. Deland, *Rambles in Realms*, p. 125.

because they were at one with all things." In one way, this meant that all behavior had to be responsible, since its effect always went beyond the individual. In another way, it meant that an individual had to, was responsible to, increase, intensify, spread, recognize, experience this relationship. To grow in manliness, in humanness, in holiness, meant to plunge purposively deeper into the relatedness of all things. A Dakota never assumed responsibility, because responsibility was had, was there always. Where we would say that a man assumed a new responsibility, they would consider that, in such a situation, a man made an autonomous decision to carry out this particular had responsibility, or to act responsibly. For the Dakota, to be was to be responsible; because to be was to be related; and to be related meant to be responsible.⁷⁴

In addition to the power of the parental generation to control their children in the kinship group the males tended to have authority over the females. This was based primarily on the higher honor which the male could obtain in his difficult roles as hunter and fighter. The female roles were just as essential, but they were secondary, since they supported and encouraged the more essential functions—providing food and security. It seems unlikely that this male authority was used without caution, and there are enough recorded cases of heroic acts performed by women to indicate that they were never completely dominated by the men. As in any society with a preliterate division of labor, the influence of women may be more effective than evident.

The control of their leaders over the Dakota was never arbitrary and certainly never tyrannical, and as long as they were equitably selected by the kinship groups, they represented the will of their family group. The problem of divided loyalty and questionable authority occurred only after the selection of chiefs was appropriated by the government-appointed agents who wanted weak or flexible leaders that they could control rather than the more effective and vigorous men that were accepted by the people.⁷⁵ The control of the agents of the government was arbitrarily established by military force after the final resistance of the tribes had been subdued early during the reservation period. They were able to enforce the most oppressive and coercive system of bureaucratic control on the Indians that has ever been known in the United States under the guise of enforced assimilation. This control was associated with an unintelligent paternalism which completely destroyed the initiative of the Indian people.

The traders, working in conjunction with the agents to whom they were indebted for their license were, during the early reservation period, instrumental in subjugating the Dakotas and enhancing the control of the government. By reason of their facility with the language and marriage into the tribe, they could easily gain acceptance, and acting as interpreters, they used their influence to get the Dakotas to sell their land and in anticipation of the money which would be forthcoming from the government in payment, sold goods to the Indians on credit.⁷⁶

The federal government inaugurated a centralized system of education whereby the children were taken from their homes and placed in boarding schools where they were virtual prisoners and which hired special, euphemistically-designated, "disciplinarians" whose main duty was to thump recalcitrant Indian boys and girls into submission.⁷⁷ The intention was to convert the semi-civilized, Dakota-speaking, family-centered youth into an independent, English-speaking, sophisticate. Methods in the boarding school were antagonistic to the family socialization and came into conflict with the home.⁷⁸

The basic education problem—how to increase the educational opportunity and achievement while retaining the security of Dakota family life—has still not been solved. It does not seem logical to separate children from an affectionate family group to attend school, if one of the purposes of the education is to encourage the cooperation of the school and the home in the socialization process. Furthermore, the functionaries of the schools, the principles and the teachers, are frequently minor bureaucrats completely out of touch with the family-centered communities from which their pupils come.

The whole bureaucratic structure of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the associated agencies, Public Health Service, Cooperative Extension Service, and State Welfare Department, through their rules and regulations exercise a degree of control over the lives of the Dakota people that cannot be precisely estimated. Bureaucratic authority embodied in institutional norms is subtle, but pervasive, and is most restrictive when it is least understood. The people on the reservations have not had the experience necessary to learn all the techniques of avoiding or manipulating the more unwieldy bureaucratic structures, and without gui-

⁷⁴ Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁷⁵ Hyde, *A Sioux Chronicle*, pp. 229-30.

⁷⁶ Isaac Heard, *History of the Sioux War and Massacres of 1862 and 1863*, pp. 33-34.

⁷⁷ Hyde, *A Sioux Chronicle*, p. 57.

⁷⁸ South Dakota Planning Board, *Indians of South Dakota*, p. 80. "The white man's education conflicted everywhere with traditional Indian culture; school life was so different from Indian home life that the two could seldom be reconciled. When the Indian child had completed his course of education, he usually found himself a misfit in his own home, yet unable to take a place in the white civilization. The only course of adaptation open to him, in many cases, was to renounce the Indian school education and to return to his former way of living. The success of the old boarding schools was measured by the records of the children who never went home after leaving school and the failure of those who went "back to the blanket."

dance from Extension or welfare personnel are frequently confounded by the complexities of a system about which few non-Indians would claim to have workable knowledge. It is not possible to explore here the historical reasons for the present relationship between the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Dakota tribes, but the story has never been a profitable experience for the tribes.⁷⁹

Legal institutions are likewise complicated by a variety of federal, state, and local agencies with overlapping or disputed jurisdictions enforcing outmoded and inappropriate laws in courts that are either ill-prepared, indifferent, or discriminatory.⁸⁰ The tribal government makes decisions which control large areas of civil and criminal law and the tribal courts may deal with "questions of tribal membership, property, taxation, the conservation, development and use of tribal resources, social welfare, domestic relations, health, housing, inheritance, and the form of tribal government."⁸¹ The federal government, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the federal law enforcement agencies, controls most other areas of civil and criminal jurisdiction, except for some doubtful or state-appropriated areas where jurisdictional problems are overwhelming. Finally, all these control agencies impinge upon the individual Indians at innumerable places, any may differ from one place to another, and place him in the most legally unfavorable, but lawyer-favored, position of any minority group.

Sanctions: Informal group sanctions, such as shaming, were most effectively used in the traditional Dakota culture to guarantee conformity to the folkways and mores. The satirical sanction was essential to indicate disapproval of the unacceptable behavior of children and youth. As previously mentioned, the early child-training experiences, while permissive, were thorough and indoctrinated the child with the ways of the Dakota people. Other informal controls were evident in adult life and served as an example to the children. There were positive group sanctions, such as occurred in the public commendations and recitals of meritorious deeds before the congregated kinship groups, and there were also negative sanctions, such as gossip, which in intimate, primary group relationships, was a means of conveying the social offense "from mouth to myth," and could turn the offender from a minister into a mouse, a louse, or a lout. In extreme cases, if the crime against the group was a violation of the most sacred mores, the sanction of banishment might even be invoked and unless some other kinship group would succor the criminal, exile was equivalent to death or even worse.

These early group sanctions have not entirely disappeared from the Dakota reservations, but their effectiveness in controlling individual behavior has markedly declined. To say that conflict with the more formal bureaucratic sanctions has not worked to the advantage of the traditional culture patterns would be a ridiculous understatement. Even the best of the early government functionaries were not adverse to enforcing their decisions by threatening

to restrict the issue of rations necessary for survival in the early reservation era.⁸² Despite all their efforts to give assistance and programs to improve the economic welfare of the Indians, government policy has unintentionally evolved into sanction of threatened pauperization. Their protestations to the contrary and their feeble attempts to raise the level of income belie their purposeful or malicious use of this threat, but nonetheless it has been used more successfully than any other technique to keep the reservation people under control and force their assimilation. Pauperization is only an efficient sanction in demanding surface conformity, because it does not strike at the root of the problem. As long as they are faced with possible starvation, the Dakotas will cower and scheme to "beg, borrow, or steal" enough money from the Bureau to survive, but they will likewise resent every concession they are forced to make to those who dispense the "filthy lucre," and vow in their hearts and minds not to let their "left hand know what their right hand is doing." They extend their right hand to receive the handout while their left hand is engaged in sharing the spoils with their kinship group.

Recently the government policy of mediated land sales has continued this process of pauperization. Supervised sales of land are not entered into by the Indian people by "free consent" when they need the money desperately to meet their material needs for survival. They are virtually coerced by economic pressure and a policy which regards consent "insidious" to give up their only capital resource in exchange for a few months of adequate food supplies.⁸³ When the money is spent, the alternatives are relief, deprivation, or migration. It could be readily anticipated that a relocation program of assisted migration would be attempted, and that it would not be successful in these cases in which economic sanctions have been utilized to encourage migration.

⁷⁹George D. Harmon, Sixty Years of Indian Affairs, gives a review of the overall problem, pp. 361-367.

⁸⁰The bibliography material discussing the legal problems of the Indians is immense. The best summary is Felix S. Cohen, Handbook of Federal Indian Law. For other sources see the Harvard Law Record, "Bibliography on American Indian Affairs."

⁸¹Theodore H. Haas, "The Legal Aspects of Indian Affairs from 1887 to 1957," The Annals, 311 (May, 1957) p. 20.

⁸²See J. B. McGillicuddy, McGillicuddy, Agent, pp. 167-168.

⁸³William Zimmerman, Jr., "The Role of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Since 1933," The Annals, 311 (May, 1957) p. 32.

Facilities: The available land and reservation resources, skills and handicrafts, employment, educational and recreational facilities, housing and equipment have been adequately described in other studies.

Summary and Implications: In their aboriginal condition the Dakota Indians had achieved a measure of adaptation to the geographical conditions that was founded on the concept of "unity with nature." Their kinship system and other social institutions were suffused with this essential element of oneness and thus in every phase of the social system there was a quality of meaning and morale that molded the life of the individual into the social whole. It was "a way of life that worked," an interdependent and interrelated system of social rights and responsibilities, and a pattern of behavior satisfying to the needs of each tribal member.

During the early reservation period the government policy of forced assimilation was a gross failure.

When it was replaced by the New Deal policy in 1934, it is a fair question whether the over-all Indian problem was any nearer solution than it was in 1887. From the economic point of view the Indians were a pauperized people. The education which the younger Indians had received had made them marginal individuals not yet ready to take their place in the white American world but also unsettled for Indian life. The health of the Indians was sub-normal although it improved somewhat toward the latter part of this period. This policy failed in part because it attempted the rapid, forced acculturation of one cultural group to another, a procedure which social science now knows cannot be done. It is least surprising that such a policy should have failed when applied to the Indians, whose cultures were more markedly divergent from white American culture than in the case of any other minority.⁸⁴

The contemporary situation is colored by its historical antecedents and is characterized by a retention of a few elements of traditional culture, adaption of some elements of Western American culture, and a great social vacuum in which there is no guide, no rule, no norm for individual behavior. This normlessness has resulted from the rapid collapse of traditional culture values. There has not been time for new norms to be learned to replace the old. The Dakotas have been reduced to a state of "anomie," of disheartening apathy, worthlessness, and rampant festering of social ills which run the gamut of known deviations. Dakota society is "neither fish, nor fowl"; the direction of acculturation has been reversed; and conflicts in personal and social values have prevented a concerted effort to generate any social movement which might hope to revitalize the reservation communities.

In the future the story of the Dakotas needs revision, because it is still not too late to provide a happy ending. If anything is learned from the history of these brave people, the lesson should be clear that change cannot be made coercively, and that the goal should be to provide the Dakotas with means of adapting themselves to the larger society with a minimum of personal and social disorganization. The ideal of democratic "freedom of choice" is a crucial requirement which must be bolstered by increased opportunity to achieve any of these ends which they deem desirable. It is their fervent hope that a new social system can be peaceably and harmoniously created which will more adequately provide for their material, social, and cultural needs.

⁸⁴ Charles F. Mardon, Minorities in American Society, p. 328.

